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CANADA

# SHOCK

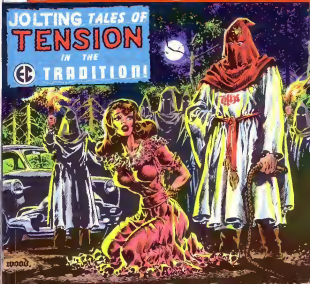
# SUSPENSTORIES

JOLTING TALES OF  
**TENSION**

IN THE



TRADITION!



wood.

BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE SHOCKING FINAL  
TWIST TO THIS GRIPPING TALE OF TENSION...

# DEAD RIGHT!

**A CRIME  
SUSPENSE STORY**



GATHY DRAINED THE LAST DROP OF TEA FROM HER CUP AND STARED DOWN AT THE TINY TEA LEAVES THAT FLOCKED THE BOTTOM! THEN SHE GLANCED ABOUT THE TINY SYBYR TEAROOM! MADAME YOUNG NODDED TO HER...

YOU WANT ME TO READ YOUR  
POURNOU IN THE TEA LEAVES?  
MY DEAR? I WILL BE WITH YOU  
IN A MOMENT!

OHAY...I'LL  
WAIT!

CATHY SAT BACK AND LIT A CIGARETTE! THE SMOKE CURLED UP LAZILY, DRIFTING TOWARD THE CEILING OF THE PICTURELESS TEARDOM! SOON MRS. MORGAN WOULD BE READING CATHY'S TEA LEAVES ONCE MORE! CATHY RELIEVED IN MRS. MORGAN'S HANDS... SHE HAD TO FORGET TIMES SHE'D READ CATHY'S FORTUNE ACCIDENTALLY! CATHY THOUGHT ABOUT THAT FIRST TIME...

DOES WORK FOR A LIVING... AN OFFICE CLERK! YOU DO NOT TYPE VERY WELL, DO YOU?

BEYOND THAT'S PRETTY GOOD!



ALL YOUR LIFE YOU HAVE DESIGNED TO MARRY WELL... TO MARRY FOR MONEY! BUT YOUR CHANCE HAS NEVER COME, SO YOU KEEP ON WORKING... AND HOPING!



TODAY, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR JOB!

MR. GAY IT, DO! MY BOSS IS OUT OF TOWN, SO I DON'T GET FIRED TODAY ANYWAY! WHICH REMINDS ME! I'D BETTER GET READY! MY LUNCH HOUR IS ALMOST UP!



YES! CATHY REMEMBERED THAT FIRST DAY WELL! SHE'D COME BACK TO THE OFFICE AND...

WHY, MR. CLAYTON? I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU BACK TODAY!

IS THIS HOW YOU TAKE CARE OF THINGS WHILE I'M GONE, MISS FINCH?



I DON'T UNDERSTAND MR. CLAYTON!

THE ELEVATOR MAN TOLD ME YOU WENT OUT TO LUNCH AT FIVE! YOU KNOW THAT WE ALLOW ONLY ONE HOUR FOR LUNCH!



OF COURSE I KNOW THAT! SO WHAT?

SO YOU'RE FIRED, MISS FINCH! IT'S ONLY TWENTY-FIVE!



THE CLOCK! THE CLOCK! THAT LITTLE STUPID TEARDOM HAD BEEN HALF AN HOUR SLOW! THAT STUPID KNEW IT! CATHY STORMED IN...

THE CLOCK! HALF AN HOUR SLOW! SO IT IS! I DIDN'T NOTICE! BUT YOU FORGOT, MISS! I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOUR EMPLOYER WAS OUT OF TOWN! HOW COULD I TELL HE'D COME BACK... UNEXPECTEDLY!

THAT... THAT'S RIGHT!



AND THAT SECOND TIME GATHY'D STOPPED IN WHILE JOE HUNTING! THE GYPSY'D EXAMINED HER GUP AND ANNOUNCED...

YOU ARE STILL OUT OF A JOB! YOUR SAVINGS ARE RUNNING LOW! BUT WAIT! DO NOT WORRY! I SEE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY IN YOUR LIFE SOMEDAY! AND A MAN! AND... OH... I SEE A JOB... TODAY!



SHE'D BEEN RIGHT AGAIN! THAT WAS THE DAY GATHY'D LANDED HER JOB IN THE RESTAURANT...

YOU WERE RIGHT, MADAME! I DID GET A JOB TODAY!

I SEE! YOU... YOU CARRY SOMETHING FOR FOOD! YOU ARE A WAITRESS!



YOU'RE ASTONISHING! YES! THE MADAM VORNA! TELL ME! DO YOU SEE ANYTHING ABOUT THAT GUY, AND THAT GUY?

YES! THE MADAM, YOU WILL MARRY HIM! BUT, WAIT! HE WILL NOT BE RICH AT THE TIME OF YOUR MARRIAGE!



FAT CHANCE! I'M NOT MARRIING ANY GUY UNLESS HE'S LOADED ALREADY! ER... IS IT... LOVE?

HE WILL INHERIT THE MONEY... INHERIT IT FROM SOMEONE NEAR AND DEAR TO HIM! SOON AFTER YOU ARE MARRIED! WAIT! I SEE SOMEONE ASKING YOU FOR DATE TOMORROW! A LARGE MAN...



MADAME VORNA HAD BEEN RIGHT FOR THE THIRD TIME! THE NEXT DAY, GATHY WAS ASKED FOR A DATE! BUT SHE TOOK ONE LOOK AT HIM, AND...

NO FRAMES, BUSTER! I'M BUSY TONIGHT!

THEN HOW ABOUT TOMORROW NIGHT, GUYE STUFF?



AND THAT NIGHT, GATHY'D GONE BACK TO MADAM VORNA...

YOU WERE RIGHT, HONEY! I DID GET ASKED FOR A DATE TODAY! WHEN YOU SAID A LARGE MAN, YOU WERE CORRECT! THIS GUY WAS DISCUSSING A FAT GUY! NOW, WHAT ABOUT MY FUTURE HUSBAND? YOU SAID HE'D INHERIT MONEY!

YES! I SEE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY! BUT WAIT! SOON AFTER HE INHERITS THIS MONEY, HE WILL DIE... VIOLENTLY!



YOU MEAN I'M GOING TO BE A WIDOW? A RICH WIDOW?

HOW I SEE THE LARGE MAN AGAIN! HE IS SITTING AT A TABLE! HE IS ASKING YOU FOR ANOTHER DATE?



THAT'S BEEN THAT VERY AFTERNOON! THE GREAT INDIVIDUAL HAD COME INTO THE RESTAURANT! WASN'T GATHE SOULN'T STAND HIM? THE ODOR OF HIS PERSPIRATION HAD SICKENED HER! WHEN HE'D SPOKE, GATHE'D CAUGHT A WHIFF OF HIS FOUL BREATH...

O'GOD, BARRY! GIMME A BREAK! WHAT NIGHT ISN'T YUH BUSY?

I'M BUSY EVERY NIGHT, AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED, BOSTON!



THE CIGARETTE SMOKE CURLED UPWARD TO THE CEILING OF THE UPPER TEAROOM! SUDDENLY, MADAM VORNA STOOD OVER GATHE...

I AM READY NOW, HERE! AND FORGET THAT MY DEAR! LET ME TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT HORRIBLE FAT GUY, WHO? FELLER I'M GONNA MARRY? THE GUY THAT'S GONNA INHERIT ALL THE DOLLAR?



MADAM VORNA TOOK GATHE'S GUP...

ANY I SEE THE LARGE MAN DOO ASK YOU FOR A DATE, AND YOU WERE JUDE TO HIM...

IF YOU GAVE WITHIN SIX FEET OF HIM, YOU'D BE MADE TOO! WHEN?



BUT HE THE LARGE MAN... HE IS THE ONE YOU WILL MARRY! HE IS THE ONE WHO WILL INHERIT THE LARGE SUM OF MONEY SOON AFTER YOU ARE MARRIED!

OH, NO?

BUT SHORTLY AFTER-WARD, HE WILL DIE... VIOLENTLY! THAT IS WHAT I SEE!

SHORTLY AFTER-WARD, ENT IS WHAT I SEE!



THAT NIGHT, GATHE THOUGHT IT ALL OVER... JUST WHAT MADAME VORNA HAD READ IN THE TEALANDS.

SHE'S BEEN RIGHT FOUR TIMES ALREADY! AND SHE DOES SEE THE FAT GUY DYING SOON AFTER HE INHERITS ALL THAT DOLLAR! VIOLENTLY, SHE SAID! MAYBE HE'LL GET KILLED IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT! AND IF I'M MARRIED TO HIM...



SO GATHE STEELERD HERSELF... HID HER REVULSION...

AND... HELLO, BARRY! BUSY TONIGHT AGAIN?

FORGET? WHY, WHY, AND? FORGOTTEN I'M NOT, CHUCK... BUSY!



CATHY ALMOST THREW UP WHEN HE TOOK HER HAND IN HIS GREASY BLOATED HANDS...

HOW 'BOUT GOIN' OUT WITH ME T'NIGHT, CUTHY?

ALL RIGHT! ...CHOKE...

IT WAS HORRIBLE! THE EVENING WAS LIKE A NIGHTMARE! CHARLIE MARMO WAS HIS NAME! HE TOOK CATHY TO A MOVIE! THEY SAT THERE TOGETHER IN THE DARK, CATHY SNEEZING WITH EACH BREATH SHE TOOK...

IT'S GOOD PIPONER, Y-YES, CH, CATHY? CHARLIE?

AND AFTERWARDS, DANCING WITH THE LUMBERING CH IN A CHEAP NIGHT-CLUB...

WAIN? A GOOD TIME, CATHY? GREAT, CHARLIE!

CATHY WAS SICK TO HER STOMACH ALL THAT NIGHT! THE NEXT DAY, AS SOON AS SHE COULD GET AWAY, SHE RUSHED TO MADAME MOINA...

I'VE GOT TO BE SURE, MADAME MOINA! IT'S GOT TO BE RIGHT! IT? YOU SAID IT WAS A LOT OF DOLLAR HE'D BRING! HOW MUCH?

HIS INITIALS! I SEE HIS INITIALS...M!

CHARLES MARMO? YES! THAT'S RIGHT! CAN YOU SEE HOW MUCH MONEY?

I SEE... I SEE TWENTY. NO... TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS!

CATHY WAS SURE NOW! FOR TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS, SHE COULD STAND ANYTHING! EVEN DISASTERS! CHARLIE MARMO! THEN, SEVERAL WEEKS OF WAITING LATER... SEVERAL HORRIBLE WEEKS OF BEING NEAR HIM! CHARLIE PROPOSED...

I AIN'T GOT MUCH NOW, CATHY! BUT I GOT GOOD PROSPECTS! WILL YUH MARRY ME?

CHARLIE! DO YOU HAVE ANYONE CLOSE TO YOU... A BROTHER... OR AN AUNT... WHO IS... ER... RIGHT?

MY UNCL'S GOT A FACTORY! HE'S WORTH SOMETHIN'! BUT I WOULDN'T ASK HIM FOR ANYTHIN'!

OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT, CHARLIE! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO ASK HIM! YES, CHARLIE! I'LL MARRY YOU!



FOR A MOMENT...FOR A MISERABLE SICKENING MOMENT...WHEN CHARLIE TOOK HER INTO HIS ARMS AND PLANTED HIS FLABBY LIPS UPON HER, CATHY THOUGHT OF DISCARDING THE WHOLE DEAL! BUT "TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS" BOOMED IN HER BEELING BRAIN.

SO SHE WENT THROUGH WITH IT! SHE MARRIED HIM! THEY WENT ON A CHEAP HONEYMOON... TO A TWO-BIT RESORT HOTEL NEAR THE SEA-SHORE! CATHY WAS ALMOST TOO ASHAMED TO BE SEEN WITH CHARLIE! WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE IN A BATHING SUIT...



OH, BABY! BABY!  
WE'RE GONNA BE  
SO HAPPY!

SCORE, CHARLIE!  
CHORE... SURE!



WOULDN'T SMELL THAT  
FRESH AIR, BABY?  
HIDE, SH?

YES, CHARLIE!

FIRST FRESH AIR  
I'VE HAD IN DAYS!

AND AFTER THE HONEYMOON, CHARLIE AND CATHY MOVED INTO A SHABBY FURNISHED ROOM...THE DAYS AND NIGHTS GAVELED BY...PAINFULLY!CATHY WRITES...

BY THE WAY, CHARLIE! HAVE YOU HEARD FROM YOUR SINGLE RECENTLY? YOU KNOW... THE BUNCH ONE?

WOULDN'T ON HIM?  
SURE! WHY SHOULD I HEAR FROM HIM?  
HE'S OUT WEST... WITH HIS FAMILY!

FAMILY? YOU DIDN'T TELL ME!

YOU DIDN'T ASK ME! SAY, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE ANYWAY?



A MONTH PASSES! THEN TWO! CATHY WENT BACK TO THE OFFICE FLOOR...

TELL ME, MADAME YORNA!WHEN WILL HE INHERIT THE MONEY?  
TELL ME! I CAN'T STAND IT MUCH LONGER!

SOON!  
I SEE IT COMING!  
SOON!  
AND THEN...

... HIS DEATH!

THANKS, MADAME YORNA! I'LL... BE SEEING YOU!

WITH MADAME YORNA'S ASSURANCE,CATHY WENT BACK TO LIVING WITH CHARLIE WITH RESIGNED DETERMINATION...

C'MON T'NEED, I... CHORE... I'M GATHY!

NOT T'NEED, CHARLIE!



AND THEN IT HAPPENED! CATHY'S STOPPED IN AT A LARGE CAFETERIA IN TOWN FOR A BITE TO EAT! AS SHE TOOK HER CHECK AND MOVED DOWN THE LINE OF COOUNTERS...



"HUNK! I GOT THE STRANGEST FEELIN' THAT EVERYBODY'S WATCHIN' ME!"



WHAT'LL IT BE, MA'AM?

I'LL HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE...

HOLD IT!

LIGHTS!

SUDDENLY, THE CAFETERIA WAS FLOODED WITH BLINDING LIGHT! CATHY SPUN AROUND! EVERYONE WAS APPLAUDING! A MAN IN A BLUE SERGE SUIT STEPPED FORWARD, SMILING...

FORMER LADY! CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE NETHERLAND CAFETERIA'S ONE MILLIONTH CUSTOMER!

C-CATHY! MRS. CATHY MARRO! I DON'T UNDERSTAND!



SOMEONE HANDED THE SMILING MAN A RECTANGULAR PIECE OF PAPER...

MRS. MARRO OF THE MANAGEMENT OF NETHERLAND CAFETERIA TAKES PLEASURE IN PRESENTING YOU... OUR MILLIONTH CUSTOMER... WITH A CHECK... FOR TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS!

CASH!



IT TOOK CATHY SEVERAL HOURS TO COMPOSE HERSELF! TO WARD OFF EVERYONE SHE CAME HOME... THE CASH IN HER POCKETBOG...

CATHY THAT YES IT'S ME, YOUR FOUNDER!



CATHY!

SHE WAS WRONG, YOU FAT SLOB! MRS. MARRO FORGOT WAS WRONG! IT WAS ME THAT GOT THE TWENTY-FIVE GRAND! NOT YOU!



WHAT ARE YOU FALSOOD ABOUT, CATHY? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I MEAN I'M LIZZY! MR. YOL, YOU CHUMB! I DON'T NEED YOU NOW! I'M FALSOOD GUY! THANKS FOR THREE MONTHS OF PERPETUAL NAUSEA!





CHARLIE MOVED QUICKLY...BAILING THE COOK...

CATHY! YOU CAN'T WALK OUT ON ME! WE LOVE EACH OTHER!

LOVE! MAN! I CAN'T STAND BEING NEAR YOU!



CATHY! GET OUT OF MY HAT, YOU FILTHY, SMELLY...



CATHY! CHARLIE! DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT!



IF I CAN'T HAVE YOU... NOBODY CAN!

CHARLIE! PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE!

CHARLIE BROUGHT THE GLEAMING KNIFE BLADE DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN! CATHY'S BAG FELL TO THE FLOOR... THE TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS SPILLING OUT, SLOTTING OUT THE BLOOD...



IF I... UMM... CAN'T HAVE YOU... UMM... NO ONE... UUU... CAN!

ONE DAY, SHORTLY AFTER CATHY'S MURDER, A WINDY BRIZZE SWIFT ACROSS A SIGNAL CEMETERY, CARRYING WITH IT A FLUTTERING SHEET OF NEWSPAPER...



THE PAPER CAME TO REST BY A HEADSTONE (LAD FOR WITH THE MONEY CHARLES MARNO HAD INHERITED)...



...INHERITED FROM SOMEONE NEAR AND DEAR TO HIM!

THE HEADLINES SCREAMED IN HUGE LETTERS...



DAILY CLARION  
**CHARLES MARNO DIES IN CHAIR!**  
LAST NIGHT, AT 11:40 AM, THE CONVICTED MURDERER WAS PROVOQUED DEAD BY PRISON WARDEN J. FLAG MARSON!

THE END

HERE IS AN ELECTRIFYING STORY WITH SOLID IMPACT  
IN ITS STARTLING CONCLUSION!

# UNDER COVER!

THE WOMAN SCREAMED! ONE OF THEM PUNCHED HER AND SHE FELL TO HER KNEES! ANOTHER LASHED HER  
ARM BEHIND HER BACK! THEY STOOD AROUND HER... SILENTLY... SOMBERLY! NO ONE SPOKE! THEIR EYES  
BURMED FROM BEHIND THE HOLES IN THEIR BLACK HOODS! THE WOMAN BEGAN TO SOB... WHISPERING SOFTLY  
THE TEARS STREAKED FROM HER EYES, DOWN HER BRUISED CHEEK! SHE FELL TO HER KNEES... LOOKING  
FROM ONE HOODED FACE TO ANOTHER... PLEASURILY...

AIN'T SOMMA GO YOU AN  
GOOD, SUEY CARBON!

YOU NEED A  
LESSON!  
YOU'RE SOMMA  
GET IT!

WE'RE SOMMA TEACH  
YOU NOT TO FOOL  
AROUND WITH  
THEM!

YOU'RE SOMMA GET THE  
WHIPPIN' OF YOUR LIFE,  
SUEY CARBON!

**A SHOCK  
SUSPENSE STORY**

THE WOMAN FELL FACE DOWNWARD, HER BODY BEATING  
WITH EACH BURSTED SOB! A VOICE CALLED OUT...

MAKE WAY FOR THE  
GRAND MASTER!

THE BLACK-HOODED FORMS LOOKED UP FROM THE  
PROSTRATE WOMAN! A FIGURE APPEARED, MOVING  
INTO THE CIRCLE! HE WAS DRESSED DIFFERENTLY  
THAN THE OTHERS! HE WAS THEIR LEADER! HIS  
HOOD GLEAMED BLOODY-RED IN THE FIRELIGHT...

WITNESS TO THE  
TRIAL! GIVE ME  
THE WHIP!

YES, GRAND  
MASTER!

TWO BLACK-HOODED FIGURES LIFTED THE SCREAMING WOMAN AND DROGGED HER TO A TREE! HER ARMS WERE UNTIED AND SWUNG AROUND ITS TRUNK... THEN BENTED ONCE AGAIN...

SHE IS READY, GRAND MASTER!

JUST CARBON? FOR CONCERTING WITH... WITH THAT FASHION ELEMENT IN OUR TOWN, THE BLACK HOOD-LANTE SOCIETY SENTENCES YOU TO ONE HUNDRED LASHES!



THE WOMAN CLOSED HER EYES, SQUEEZING OUT THE GATHERED TEARS! THE BLOOD-RED-HOODED LEADER SAID HIS GLOVED HAND... LIFTING THE HEAVY LEATHER STRAP...

THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO STAY WITH YOUR OWN... AND...



THE STRAP LASHED DOWNWARD ACROSS THE WOMAN'S BACK! THE COUNT BEGAN

ONE...



THE BELT ROSE AND FELL AGAIN...

TWO...



SAMUEL MASTERS TURRED AWAY FROM THE HORRIBLE SIGHT... A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPING OVER HIM...

THREE... OH, LORD! LORD...



SAMUEL MASTERS SHOOK HIS HEAD! HE SLID DOWNWARD UNTIL HE SAT WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS! THE VOICE IN THE CLEARING DRIFTED TO HIS HIDING PLACE... ECHOING THE SHARP CRACK OF THE LEATHER STRAP...

FOUR! THE DIRTY FILTHY-ROTTEN OH, LORD! WHY DO THEY DO THIS? WHY DID I HAVE TO SEE IT? WILL I EVER SLEEP AGAIN?



FIVE! BLAST YOU, ED PENTON! BLAST YOU! WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP ME? WHY DID YOU LET ME STICK MY NOSE IN? WHY DID YOU LET ME START? NOW, NOW I'LL HAVE TO... FORGET IT!



THE FALLING STRAP FRAGS! THE BOARDS OF A BUSY NEWSPAPER OFFICE CAME UP! SAMUEL MARTENS WAS THIRING...THIRING ABOUT ED PERTON. THINKING ABOUT THE DAY HE'D VOLUNTEERED...

LOOK, SAM! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THOSE FLOORING! ALL I'M SAYING IS, IT'S TROUBLE! KEEP OUT OF IT!

HOW CAN I, ED? THOSE HOODED GANGS ARE A MENACE!

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! THEY'RE A MENACE! ARE YOU GOING TO FIGHT THEM SINGLE-HANDED?

LOOK! THEY'RE KIDNAPPED AND FLOORED INNOCENT PEOPLE... GUILTY OF NOTHING MORE THAN PRACTICING DEMOCRACY! THE F.B.I. IS INTERESTED!

AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP THE F.B.I. GARD? THE LITTLE DETECTIVE? JUNIOR G-MAN?

I'M GOING THERE FOR A STORY, SAM! I'M GOING TO EXPOSE THIS HOT YEN MESS! HOW DO I GET YOUR GRAY, OR DON'T I?



GRAY? GRAY? BE A HERO? SEE WHERE IT GETS YOU! ANY ONE THING, SAM? BE CAREFUL! HUH? DON'T GET YOURSELF KILLED!

KILLED? KILLED? THE WORD EXPLODED IN SAM'S MIND! HE FROD HIS HEAD UP FROM HIS HIDING PLACE...

I SAID SHE'S DEAD! YOU BARE? UNFIE? KILLED? HET?



A BLACK-HOODED FIGURE STOPPED FORWARD AND CUT THE TIGHTS! HEATER OF THE... AROUND THE TREE! HER LIFELESS BODY SLID TO THE GROUND LIMPLY...



THE LEADER... THE RED-HOODED ONE, REMOVED HIS MASK AND KEELY TO LISTEN TO THE GIRL'S HEART...



THE FRIGHT DANCED ON HIS PERSPIRING FACE...



IN HIS HIDING PLACE, SAM MASTERFULLY LEANED FORWARD, STUDYING THE UNARMED GANG LEADER... STUDYING HIS FACE...



THE CLEARING WAS DESERTED! THE FIVE DAZZLED LOW/TEAM CAME OUT FROM HIS HIDING PLACE, WATCHING THE LAST SAM'S TAIL LIGHT DRAGGERS DOWN THE LONELY COUNTRY ROAD...



THE BLACK-HOODED FIGHTER MOVED OFF TOWARD THEIR CARS! THE LEADER SLIPPED HIS RED MASK BACK OVER HIS FACE ONCE MORE! TWO OF THE GANG LIFTED THE DEAD WOMAN'S BODY...



A THIRD CRAPPED BEHIND SAM! HE SPUN AROUND! TWO HOODED FIGURES STAYED AT HIM...



SAM BEGAN TO RUN! BEHIND THE HOODS FELTER CHARGED THROUGH THE UNDERBUSH AFTER HIM...



IT SEEMED TO SAM THAT HE'D BEEN FUMMING FOR HOURS WHEN HE FINALLY FELL TO THE GROUND, EXHAUSTED...



SAM LAY IN THE UNDERBUSH, SOBBINGLY BREATHING! THE TWO HOODED FIGURES PULPED BY, CLOSE ENOUGH FOR HIM TO REACH OUT AND TOUCH THEM...



AFTER A WHILE, THEY DARED BACK...  
OVERHEARD HEAVILY...

STOP! I'VE GOT  
YOU HE WENT THE  
OTHER WAY!

OHAY! NO WE LOST  
HIM! HE WON'T  
GET FAR! WE'LL  
TELL THE OTHERS!

HEY! DO YOU  
THINK HE SAW  
THE... THE  
BRAND  
MASTERS' FACE?

I NEVER THOUGHT  
OF THAT! YOU  
MEAN, WHEN HE  
TOOK OFF HIS  
MASK?

YEAH! HE'LL... GO  
TO THE F.B.I.!  
HE'LL IDENTIFY  
HIM!

IF HE SAW HIS  
FACE! WE CAN'T  
BE SURE!  
O'NOW! LET'S  
GET BACK INTO  
TOWN!



IT WAS STARTING TO RAIN WHEN SAM  
SLIPPED BACK INTO TOWN AND MADE HIS WAY  
TOWARD HIS HOTEL...

"OH! A CAR'S PARKED IN FRONT! MOTOR'S  
WINDING!" I CAN TELL FROM THE EXHAUST!  
THEY'RE WAITING FOR ME! I'VE GOT TO  
EMERGE IN THROUGH THE BACK!



SAM DARTED DOWN AN ALLEY AND ACROSS THE REAR  
YARD OF THE BUILDING THAT LINED THE MAIN  
STREET! FINALLY HE REACHED THE HOTEL'S BACK  
ENTRANCE...

WHO'S THAT? OH! MR  
MASTERS!

I'VE GOT TO MAKE A  
CALL. "GOOD!" GIVE  
ME THE PHONE!



THE CLERK HANDED SAM THE PHONE...

HELLO! HELLO, OPERATOR!  
GIVE ME THE F.B.I.  
QUICKLY!

GOOD LORD!  
THE VIGILANTES!



THEY CROSSED THE LOBBY! THERE WERE FOUR  
OF THEM, THEIR EYES RIVETED ON SAM FROM THE  
HOLES IN THEIR BLACK HOODS...

RAT DOWN THE  
PHONE, MOTHER!

DO YOU WERE MOTHER!  
STAYING OUT AT THE  
CLEANING TONIGHT?

WE'LL TEACH  
YOU HOW TO  
NOSE  
AROUND!



SAM BACKED UP THE HOODED FIGURES MOVED IN...

WHAT DID YOU SEE, MR. MOSEY? WHAT DID YOU SEE?

I SAW YOU KILL THAT WOMAN!

AND YOU WERE GOING TO TELL THE F.B.I.?

WHAT ELSE DID YOU SEE, MOSEY?

DID YOU RECOGNIZE ANYBODY?

THE GRAND MASTER HAD HIS MASK OFF! DID YOU SEE HIS FACE?

NO! NO! I DON'T SEE ANYBODY'S FACE!



YOU SURE, MOSEY? YOU SURE?

I DIDN'T SEE ANYBODY!

BE SURE, MISTER! BE SURE!



I DON'T... NO... I TELL YOU! I... DIDN'T... ANYBODY!



THE FOUR OF THEM MOVED IN ON SAM... PUNCHING... KICKING... SWEARING...

THIS'LL... TEACH YOU...

MIND... YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

AND... DON'T TALK!



THE SLACKERS CLOSED IN ON SAM! THE BLACK-NEGS... AND THE GAG...



THE FOG CLEARED! THE ROOM WAS BRIGHT! SAM LAY ON A HOSPITAL BED! A DOCTOR BENT OVER HIM! TWO MEN WHISPERED TOGETHER IN LOW TONES...



HE'S COMING TO, GENTLEMEN!  
 WHERE AM I? WHAT HAPPENED?  
 TAKE IT EASY, MR. MASTERS!

ONE OF THE MEN APPROACHED THE BED! HE FLASHED A BADGE...



YOU'VE BEEN OUT OF GOLD FOR FOUR HOURS, MR. MASTERS! THEY SAWE YOU QUOTE A BEASTLY FIM FROM THE F.B.I. YOU PUT IN A GALE TO US...  
 WHY DID THEY DO THIS, MR. MASTERS?  
 I SAW THEM! I SAW THEM KILL A WOMAN FOREVER!

KILL A WOMAN?  
 THEY PLANNED HER TO DEATH? CAN IT ALL?  
 DID YOU SEE WHO DID IT? DID YOU SEE ANY OF THEM FACES?



THE GRAND MASTER? HE TOOK OFF HIS MASK? I CAN IDENTIFY HIM! HE WAS THE ONE THAT ACTUALLY DID IT!



ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN IDENTIFY HIM, MR. MASTERS?  
 POSITIVE! I SAW HIS FACE CLEARLY!  
 THAT'S ALL WE WANTED TO KNOW!



A HOUR STEPPED FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN AND ADOCKED THE TWO FRONT F.B.I. MEN AND THE FRONT DOCTOR PULLED THEIR GUNS AND FIRED...



THE GRAND MASTER LOOKED DOWN AT THE DEAD NEWS-PAPERMAN... HIS PAPER'LL MAKE TROUBLE FOR US... WHEN THEY FIND HIS BODY BUT IT WON'T LAST LONG! THEY'LL GOOL OFF! AND WITHOUT AN IDENTIFYING WITNESS... WE'RE SAFE!



YES...SAFE! SAFE BEHIND THEIR MASKS OF PREJUDICE, THESE HODDED PEDDLERS OF RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL HATRED OPERATE TODAY! WHO YOU THEY ARE SPENDING AND RUTHLESS MEN SUCH AS THOSE IN OUR COURT, HOW CAN WE STAY 'COOL' AND INDIFFERENT TO THIS THREAT TO OUR DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE? IT IS TIME TO UNWEIL THESE USURPERS OF OUR CONSTITUTIONALLY GUARANTEED FREEDOM!



THE WIND-UP TO THIS SCIENCE-FICTION  
YARN SHOULD GIVE YOU QUITE A JOLT...!

# NOT SO TOUGH!



IT BEGAN WHEN LIEUTENANT ARDEN, THE ASTRO-NAVIGATOR... CAME TO THE ROCKET-SHIP COMMANDER...

"WHY ARE YOU  
SO SURE YOU  
CHECKED YOUR  
FIGURES?"

"YES, SIR! WHEN WE CROSSED  
THE SEVENTH DEGREE ANGLE  
AND I STILL HADN'T SIGHTED  
TASSARUS YET, I CHECKED!  
WE'VE DEFINITELY LOST!"



COMMANDER BERGMAN CURSED...

"I'LL JUDGE YOU FOR THIS,  
ARDEN! I'LL SEE YOU SCRAMBLING  
STRAGGLES FORGED WHEN  
I GET THROUGH WITH YOU!"

"I DON'T KNOW  
HOW I MADE  
MY MISTAKE, SIR!  
I'VE GONE BACK  
OVER MY COURSE  
CALCULATIONS A  
DOZEN TIMES..."



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY

I DON'T GIVE A HOOT WHERE YOU MADE YOUR STUPID ERROR... THE FACT IS... YOU MADE IT!

YES, SIR!

COMMANDER BERGMAN SWITCHED UP THE SHIP'S INTERCOM MINE AND BARKED INTO IT...

ATTENTION! ALL HANDS! REPORT TO THE CONTROL ROOM... IMMEDIATELY!

I'LL TRY TO RECALIBRATE, SIR... AND FIGURE OUT EXACT LOCATION!

NEVER MIND! ONE MISTAKE IS ENOUGH! YOU'RE THROUGH, AGENT! BARKED UP!

BUT... SIR...

THE CREW OF THE ROCKET-SHIP FILED INTO THE CONTROL ROOM! COMMANDER BERGMAN LIT A CIGARETTE.

WELCOME AHEAD! LIEUTENANT AGDEN, HERE, WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? HAS JUST INFORMED ME THAT HE HAS MADE A SLIGHT ERROR IN THE CALCULATIONS FOR OUR COURSE SETTINGS... AND WE ARE NOW TRAVELING IN AN UNCHARTED SECTION OF OUR GALAXY!

THE STERN-FACED SHIP'S COMMANDER STEPPED FORWARD AND PEPPEL LIEUTENANT HARDEN'S EMPLOYMENT FROM HIS SLOUCH...

I HEAVILY BELIEVE LIEUTENANT HARDEN OF HIS COMMISSION AND DECIDE HIM TO THE RANK OF ROCKET-MAN, THIRD CLASS!

SIR? NO?

THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP AND ITS CREW DEPENDS UPON THE JOBS PERFORMED BY EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF THAT CREW! LET THIS BE A LESSON TO ALL OF YOU! I WILL NOT TOLERATE MISTAKES! I'LL JUMP ANYONE AND EVERYONE WHO FALLS DOWN ON HIS JOB! SERGEANT COOKMAN WILL TAKE OVER AS NAVIGATION OFFICER! THE REST OF YOU... DISMISSED!

THE MEN FILED SILENTLY OUT OF THE CONTROL ROOM! THE SE-COMMISSIONED OFFICER HUNG HIS HEAD, BITING HIS LIPS...

WELL, AGENT! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? YOU KNOW WHERE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS ARE! REPORT THERE FOR DUTY!

Y-YES, SIR!

ROBERT ARDEN MOVED DOWN THE CORRIDOR AND OPENED THE DOOR TO THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS! INSIDE, THE NOISE OF BABBLING VOICES DIED SUDDELY AS ALL EYES TURNED TOWARD HIM! THERE WAS A MOMENT OF ANWARD SILENCE AND THEN...



...THERE'S AN EMPTY BUNK DOWN THERE, BOB!

CAN I HELP YOU WITH YOUR FRIENDS, BOB?

FORGET THE 'JOB' STUFF, BOB! THAT DOESN'T GO ANYMORE!

THEY CROWDED AROUND HIM, OFFERING THEIR SYMPATHY...



HELLO, LIEUTENANT! WE'RE SORRY...

ROCKET-MAN THIRD CLASS, NOW! NOT LIEUTENANT! AND... CALL ME BOB!

JUST FOR ONE MISTAKE! ONE LONELY MISTAKE! WHAT A DIRTY TRICK!

YOU HEARD THE OLD MAN? ONE MISTAKE COULD MEAN THE SAFETY OF THE SHIP AND THE CREW!

SURE, BOB! BUT EVEN THE BEST GUYS MAKE A MISTAKE! OKAY! BUT TO SUIT NOW... RIGHT TO THE BOTTOM! THAT'S TOO HARD...

PERHAPS! THE COMMANDER'S A HARD MAN! BUT HE DIDN'T TELL YOU IS... BECAUSE OF MY ONE MISTAKE... WE'RE LOST!

LOST! LOST!



MEANWHILE, IN THE CONTROL ROOM, COMMANDER HORACE BENDMAN AND HIS ASSISTANT OFFICER, VICE-COMMANDER PHILIP FORBES, WERE ARGUING...

BUT COODAN ISN'T QUALIFIED, HORACE! YOU'VE GOT TO PUT ARDEN BACK ON THE JOB!

ARE YOU CRAZY, FORBES? I BOOSED HIM!



RECOMMISSION HIM! HE MIGHT FIND HIS MISTAKE AND FIGURE OUT LOCATION! FRANKLY, I'M WORRIED! WE ONLY HAVE TWO MONTHS OXYGEN SUPPLY LEFT! SUPPOSE COODAN CAN'T LOCATE US! THEN, WHAT'VE WE JUST CAN'T WANDER AROUND TILL THE OXYGEN RINES OUT?

AND I CAN'T RECOMMISSION ARDEN! THE CREW WILL THINK I'VE GONE SOFT!



SO WHAT? MAYBE YOU GOVT TO LEASE UP FRODOE ALWAYS DOWN ON THEM - SUFFERING THEM! MAYBE YOU SHOULD SOFTEN UP!

I THINK I'VE HEARD ENOUGH, FORBES! THE SHIP IS UNDER MY COMMAND! I MUST MAKE SURE THAT DISCIPLINE IS MAINTAINED! IF IT MEANS BEING HARD ON THE MEN, THEN I'LL BE HARD ON THEM! ARDEN STAYS BROKEN! THAT'S ALL...



VICE-COMMANDER PHILIP FORBES SLAMMED THE DOOR TO THE CONTROL ROOM AFTER HIM AND MUTTERED UNDER HIS BREATH...

**SOMEDAY... SOMEBODY! SOMEDAY YOU'LL SUFFER UP!**



AFTER ONE MONTH OF BARRAGE-ING... HOPELESSLY LOST, THROUGH THE VAST VOID OF THE UNCHARTED GALACTIC, SERGEANT COOGAN ANNOUNCED...

**I'M SORRY, SIR! I'VE DONE MY BEST! I'VE SEARCHED AND RECHECKED BRUCE'S FIGURES! I CAN'T FIND HIS MISTAKE! I CAN'T...**



SERGEANT COOGAN OPENED THE DOOR TO THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS AND CROSSED TO HIS BUNK. HE SAT DOWN, HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS...

**WHAT HAPPENED, HE, HE ASKED COOGAN? WE OUTFLE... TRIED... BUT I COULDN'T DO IT! I COULDN'T FIND YOUR MISTAKE! SO HE BASTED ME!**



AND THEN, THE COMMANDER ANNOUNCED...

**WE HAVE LESS THAN ONE MONTH'S SUPPLY OF OXYGEN LEFT! STARTING TODAY, WE'RE CUTTING DOWN UNTIL WE CAN REPLENISH OUR SUPPLY! WE WILL BE USING THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM NEEDED TO OBTAIN LIFE! YOU WILL LIMIT YOURSELVES TO ONLY ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES...**



IT WAS SEVEN LATER... A WEEK OF SUFFERING FOR EACH BREATH... WHEN COOGAN SUDDENLY BROKE DOWN...

**WE'RE GOING TO DIE! WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!**

**COOGAN? TAKE IT EASY!**



THE POOR MAN COMPLETELY LOST CONTROL. HE RAVED HYSTERICALLY UNTIL HE FELL BACK ONTO HIS BUNK SCREAMING...

**COOGAN! COOGAN! BAST! HE NEEDS AIR! GET AN OXY-BOTTLE UP HERE!**

**WHAT'S GOING ON?**



IT'S COOGAN, SIR! HE'S HAD A BREAKDOWN! HE NEEDS AIR! HE'S SCREAMING! I WANT REALLY FOR AN OXY-BOTTLE!

**NEVER MIND! WE'LL NEED EVERY DROP OF OXYGEN LEFT ON BOARD! WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE IT ON ONE MAN...**



THEY WATCHED GOSMAN WRITE IN HIS MYSTICAL CONTORTIONS, BASKING FOR AIR! FINALLY...



HE... HE'S DEAD!

YOU COULD HAVE SAVED HIM!

I'M INTERESTED ONLY IN SAVING THIS SHIP AND ITS CREW... ALL OF YOU!

ED-LIEUTENANT ARDEN'S FACE FLUSHED CRIMSON! HE SCREAMED AT THE COMMANDER...



HOW COULD YOU BE LIKE THAT? HOW COULD YOU BE SO HARD-HEARTED? YOU... YOU MURDERER! HIM!

ROCKET-MAN ARDEN! I SUGGEST THAT YOU... CALM DOWN!

BUT ROCKET-MAN ARDEN DIDN'T CALM DOWN! HIS EYES BULGED AS HE SCORCHED AT THE COM-MANDER...



MURDERER! MURDERER!

ARDEN!



ROCKET ARDEN PITCHED FORWARD... FACE DOWNWARD... DEAD! THE OTHERS OF THE CREW STARED AT HIM! THE COMMANDER BARRED AN ORDER...



JETTISON THESE TWO GUY'S AT ONCE! ANY MORE OUT-BURSTS OF THIS KIND WILL BE DEALT WITH THE SAME WAY!

COMMANDER BERGMAN STALKED OUT OF THE ROCKET-MEN'S QUARTERS! VICE-COMMANDER FORBES STARED AFTER HIM...



WHAT MAKES HIM THAT WAY, SIR? WHAT MAKES HIM SO... SO...

HARD-BEHELY'S DON'T SHOW! BUT SOMEDAY... SOMEDAY HE'LL CRASH!

THE SHIP WAS ON ITS LAST OXY-BOTTLE WHEN IT ENTERED THE STRANGE SOLAR SYSTEM...



LOOK, SIR! THAT ROSE PLANET! CLOUDS! COVERED WITH GLOBES! DO YOU THINK...?

CRY FOR AIR! HELP! LOOK AT THESE SPECTRO-GRAM READINGS! BE ATTENTION! CAN REPLENISH OUR SUPPLY?

ALL HANDS! PREPARE FOR LANDING! PREPARE FOR LANDING!

THE SHIP MOVED IN TOWARD THE  
HUGE PLANET! FASTER AND  
FASTER IT FELL...

SWING 'ER  
AROUND! BLAST  
OFF! WE'RE  
BEING SUCKED  
IN TOO FAST!

SHE'S NOT A  
TREMENDOUS  
GRAVITATIONAL  
PULL!



THE REAR ROCKET-TUBES BEGAN  
TO FIRE... SLOWING THE SPACE-  
CRAFT'S DESCENT...

WE'RE STILL  
GOING IN  
TOO FAST!

MORE  
POWER!  
MORE  
POWER!



THE 8-PULL! IT'S  
TOO STRONG!  
WE'LL NEVER  
BE ABLE TO  
STAND IT!

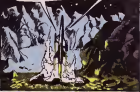
FULL POWER!  
WE'RE SETTING  
OUT OF HERE!



FULL POWER WAS APPLIED! BUT...

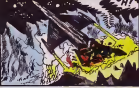
IT'S NO USE! WE CAN'T GET  
BACK UP! THE 8-PULL IS  
TOO STRONG!

WE'RE  
GOING  
IN!



EVEN WITH FULL POWER ON, THE SHIP SMASHED TO  
THE PLANET'S SURFACE HEAVILY...

YAAAAAAAAGGGH!



INSIDE, ON HIS SHOCK COUCH, COMMANDER BERGMAN  
TRIED TO LIFT HIS HEAD... TRIED TO MOVE HIS ARMS!  
IT WAS AS IF HE WERE BEING HELD DOWN BY THOU-  
SANDS OF POUNDS OF WEIGHT...

UUUNNNNNNNNNNGG!



AND THEN HIS BODY... A BODY NOT ABLE TO WITH-  
STAND SUCH A GRAVITATIONAL PULL... JUST  
SEEMED TO MELT... SPREADING OUT IN A RED PULPY  
POOL OF GORE...



YES! COMMANDER HORACE BERGMAN HAD FINALLY  
DIED! SOFT!



FOR SHEER, STARK HORROR, READ THIS TERRIFYING TALE...  
GUARANTEED TO JAR YOU OUT OF YOUR SEAT!

# SUGAR 'N SPICE 'N...

THEY WERE OUT THERE AGAIN... THE KIDS FROM DOWN THE BLOCK... JOHNNY AND MARGARET? I COULD HEAR THEIR CHILDISH HIGH-PITCHED VOICES SCAMPERING! I PEERED THROUGH THE CURTAINS AT THEM! JOHNNY WAS THE OLDER OF THE TWO... ABOUT TEN OR ELEVEN! MARGIE, HIS YOUNGER SISTER, WAS NO MORE THAN EIGHT! THE BRIGHTLY COLORED BALL THEY'D BEEN PLAYING CATCH WITH BOUNCED OUT OF THE LITTLE GIRL'S HANDS AND LEAPED OVER THE FRONT FENCE INTO MY FRONT YARD...

CATCH IT, MARGIE!  
CATCH IT! OH...

IT... IT WENT  
INTO HER  
HARDER!  
BOLLY!

I AM AN OLD WOMAN! CHILDREN ALWAYS SEEM TO BE FRIGHTENED BY OLD WOMEN! MARGIE AND JOHNNY WERE ESPECIALLY FRIGHTENED OF ME! THEY CALLED ME THE 'OLD CRAB!' I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE I WAS ALWAYS CHASING THEM FROM IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE...

WHAT'LL WE  
DO?

WE'VE GOT TO GET IT! IT'S  
OUR NEW BALL! MOMMY'LL  
BE ANGRY WITH US IF WE  
LOSE IT!



THE BOY LOOKED AROUND, STARING AT THE HOUSE? I STEPPED BACK FROM THE CURTAINED WINDOW SO HE WOULDN'T SEE ME WATCHING HIM! HE TIP TOED TOWARD THE GATE AND TRIPPED THE LATCH! IT SWUNG OPEN, SQUEAKING ON ITS RUSTY HINGES...

OH-MOMMY! SHE'LL  
HEAR YOU!

MAYBE... MAYBE SHE'S  
NOT HOME!



A HORROR  
SUSPENSORY

JOHNNY WAITED A MOMENT, STUDYING THE HOUSE FOR A SIGN OF LIFE! I STEPPED FURTHER BACK INTO THE SHADOWS! HE STARTED TO TIP-TOE UP THE WALK...



YOU KEEP YOUR EYE OUT FOR HER MARRIE!

JOHNNY JOHNNY!

THEY WERE SO CUTE! I WANTED TO EAT THEM UP! JOHNNY CREEPT TOWARD THE BALL! I WENT TO THE FRONT DOOR AND... AS HIS TINY LITTLE, PUDDY FINGERS CLOSED AROUND THE BRIGHTLY COLORED SPHERE... FLING IT OPEN...



SO!

SO!

JOHNNY! IT'S HER!

I STEPPED OUT ONTO THE PORCH, PUTTING ON MY KEET ANNOYED LOOK! I COULD SEE HIS WIDE EYES FILLING WITH TEARS! MY BRUFF VOICE EVEN SURPRISED ME...



WHAT ARE YOU A-A-M-M-ING DOING IN MY BAYBERRY?

SO! JOHNNY! RUN!

I STARTED DOWN THE STEPS SLOWLY! FOR A MOMENT, JOHNNY STOOD FROZEN IN PLACE! MARRIE STARTED TO CRY! SHE SOBBED OUT ANOTHER WARNING...



SO! JOHNNY! SO... SO... RUN!

JOHNNY TOOK A FLEETING LOOK AT HIS PRECIOUS RUBBER BALL AND DARTED OUT OF THE YARD...



SAD DON'T YOU EVER COME IN HERE AGAIN! NEXT TIME, I'LL...

I'D OLD CRAB!

STAAA! SOOR PUDD!

I HAD TO TURN AWAY FROM THEM SO THEY WOULDN'T SEE ME SMILING! THEY CERTAINLY HAD SPYKIT, THOSE TWO! I LOVE KIDS WITH SPIRIT! I BENT AND PICKED UP THEIR BALL! THEY STOPPED RUNNING AND WATCHED...



HEY! YOU OWE US BACK OUR BALL OR WE'LL TELL OUR DADDY!

HERE! COME AND GET IT!

JOHNNY'S FACE TURNED WHITE! MARRIE HAD BEHIND HIM! THEY CONTEMPLATED MY OFFER...



OH-OH! YOU ENJOY IT TO US!

YEARY! ENJOY ALL THERE... IF YOU DON'T WANT IT...

ALL THERE... IF YOU DON'T WANT IT...



I TURNED TOWARD THE PORCH, CARRYING THE BALL? I WATCHED THEM OUT OF THE CORNER OF MY EYE! THEY WERE WHISPERING TOGETHER...

WHY TAKING IT AWAY WITH HER?

WHY TOLD US NOT TO PLAY IN FRONT OF HER HOUSE? SHE'LL SAY IT SERVED US RIGHT!

I CLIMBED THE STEPS SLOWLY, GIVING THEM TIME TO MAKE UP THEIR MINDS...

AIN'T, AIN'T YEN GONNA GIVE US OUR BALL BACK?

COME AND GET IT, IF YOU WANT IT!

JOHNNY SHUFFLED ACROSS THE STREET HESITANTLY? MARRIE STOOD SILENTLY, BITING HER FINGER-NAILS.

BOTH OF YOU?

O'GONN... SULT... MARRIE?

M-NO? I'M, I'M SCARED OF HER?

JOHNNY BEGGED MARRIE TO COME WITH HIM, BUT SHE REFUSED? FINALLY, SHE FLED DOWN THE STREET, CRYING...

NO? SOB? NO? I'M SOB... SCARED?

MARRIE? WAIT?

JOHNNY STARTED AFTER HER? HE'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE BALL? I TOSSED IT AT HIM AND CALLED...

HERE? HERE'S YOUR OLD BALL? NOW, STAY OUT OF MY YARD IN FACT... STAY AWAY FROM ME IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE!

SULT?

JOHNNY CAUGHT THE BALL AND SCAMPERED AWAY AFTER HIS SISTER...

MARRIE? I GOT IT? I GOT IT?

SOB... SOB... HURRY? BEE!

I WATCHED THEM FOR A WHILE, AND THEN TURNED BACK INTO THE HOUSE...

LITTLE DEVILS? I'LL GET 'EM YET!

THAT'S THE WAY IT HAD BEEN EVER SINCE I'D MOVED INTO THAT OLD HOUSE! I'D BEEN AFTER THOSE TWO IMPS EVER SINCE THE VERY FIRST DAY! AS I WENT BACK INTO THE HOUSE AND SLAMMED THE DOOR, SOMETHING CAUGHT MY EYE! ON THE WALL...THE CALENDAR.

“OCTOBER THIRTIETH? HMM! TOMORROW'S THE THIRTY-FIRST! THAT MEANS...TODAY'S HALLOWEEN NIGHT IS...”

	1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31			

I SPENT THE NEXT DAY GETTING READY FOR HALLOWEEN! EVERY ONCE AND A WHILE, I PEERED OUT OF THE WINDOW AND WATCHED THE EGGS ON THE BLOCK SPRINGING THOSE OLD SUEK STOCKINGS FILLED WITH FLOANS...



LITTLE MARIE AND JOHNNY PROBABLY THOUGHT OF IT THE EXACT SAME MOMENT THAT I DID...

“HALLOWEEN!!! YEAH! T’MORROW NIGHT! IT’S OUR CHANCE TO GET EVEN WITH THAT OLD CREEP!”

BY EVENING, EVERYTHING WAS READY! I WAS SET FOR THEM! AND THEY DON'T DISAPPOINT ME! WHEN DARKNESS FELL, I SPIED LITTLE JOHNNY AND MARIE STEALING UP TO THE FRONT GATE...



I LISTENED TO THE RUSTY GATE SQUEAK OPEN AS JOHNNY CLEFT UP THE WALK...



... AND PLACED THE FILLED MILK BOTTLE ON THE DOOR STEP, LEANING AGAINST THE DOOR, SO THAT WHEN I'D OPEN IT, IT WOULD TIP IN AND SPILL ALL OVER THE PORCH...



THEN HE RANG THE BELL...



NATURALLY, I DIDN'T ANSWER! I JUST PEERED OUT, WATCHING THEM WHISPER TOGETHER...

SHE PROBABLY KNOWS IT'S JUST JOHNNY FURRING THE BELL! WE'VE GOT TO GET HER TO OPEN THE DOOR!

WHAT ABOUT TROU-TACK-FOE?



EVERYBODY HAS A DIFFERENT NAME FOR THAT HALLOWEEN TRICK! JOHNNY AND MARGIE CALLED IT 'TROU-TACK-FOE'! JOHNNY SLIPPED BACK UP TO THE FRONT DOOR AND PUSHED A THUMB-TACK INTO IT! FROM THE TACK, HE HUNG A LENGTH OF THREAD WITH A NUT TIED AT THE END...

SH-HH-HH! BOOP-  
WHISPER!

TEE-HEE! I... TEE-  
HEE... CAN'T HELP  
IT!



THEN, TIED TO THE NUT, THE BOY UNROLLED A SPool OF BLACK THREAD TILL IT STRETCHED BACK DOWN TO REACH THE GATE!

ALL SET! A PEAK! BOOP DOWN!

JOHNNY PULLED ON THE LONG THREAD FROM THE NUT! THEN HE LET IT GO FORWARD! THE NUT, HANGING FROM THE TACK, RAPPED AGAINST THE DOOR...

AGAIN AND AGAIN HE PULLED THE NUT BACK AND LET IT RAN AGAINST THE DOOR! ANYONE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THIS HALLOWEEN PRANK WOULD BE GREATLY LISTENING TO THAT INSISTENT TAPPING! BUT I JUST WAITED...



FINALLY, JOHNNY GAVE UP! I COULD SEE THEM WHISPERING TOGETHER...

MAYBE... MAYBE SHE'S NOT HOME!

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT!



I WATCHED THEM START AWAY, DOWN THE BLOCK... DISAPPOINTED! NOW IT WAS MY CHANCE...

H-HELP!

HEY! WHAT WAS THAT?





**SOMEONE HELP ME...**

**IT'S THE OLD CRAB! BEEP!**

**JOHNNY! I'M SCARED!**



**MAYBE SHE'S RIGHT! MAYBE SHE'S DYING!**

**H-E-C-C-I-**

**LITTLE JOHNNY STARTED BACK TOWARD MY HOUSE! I CALLED OUT ONCE MORE.**



**HELP ME... SOMEONE!**

**JOHNNY! C'MON! WHERE'S THE BOON?**

**JOHNNY SHIPPED UP THE FOREN STEPS AND REMOVED THE TILTED MILK BOTTLE...**



**YOU ALL RIGHT! HELP ME PLEASE!**

**HE TRIED THE FRONT DOOR! IT WAS UNLOCKED! I SAW THEIR FRIGHTENED FACES FLEE IN...**



**IT... IT'S DARK IN THERE, JOHNNY!**

**MEANT YOU DEAF?**

**BOON!**

**THEY STEPPED INSIDE! THE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND THEM.**



**BEEP!**

**HOW?**

**JOHNNY! IT'S LOCKED! PULL, HARDER! PULL!**



THE DOOR KNOB CAME OFF IN THE BOY'S HAND...



IT... IT BROKE!

HOW WE'LL NEVER GET OUT OF HERE!

THE HEAT FROM JOHNNY'S HAND HAD ITS EFFECT...



IT'S... IT'S STICKY! BRAC!

JOHNNY STARTED DOWN AT THE BROKEN KNOB...



IT'S CANDY! CANDY! Caramel! Candy! 1??

THE TWO CHILDREN LOOKED AROUND HONESTLY! THEY SAW... IN THE FIRE-GLASS...



LOOK! CANDY-BAND CHAIRS!

CHOCOLATE TABLES!

I OPENED THE DOOR A LITTLE FURTHER! THE BLOW ILLUMINATED MORE OF THE ROOM...



SPAN-SUGAR LAMPS!

HINGER-BREAD WALLS!

HEE! HEE!

AND THEN, I FLUNG THE OPEN DOOR OPEN ALL THE WAY! THEY SAW ME... AS I REALLY AM... A WITCH!



EEEEEEEEEE!

WELCOME, JOHN... AND MARGARET!

HANSEL! GRETEL!

YOU SEE... JOHN... IS GERHARD... IS HANS OF HANSEL! MARGARET IS GRETEL... IN GRETEL! DID HANSEL AND GRETEL GET AWAY FROM ME AS THEY DID IN THE ORIGINAL STORY? YOU MUST COME, NOW! REMEMBER! THIS IS AN E-G. MAGAZINE!

THE END